

costs, and despite the anti-immigrant tone coming from our TVs and candidates. In fact, it is the anti-immigrant tone that people tell me over and over is what is motivating them to apply, study for the tests, and better their English.

It is that energy that gives me great confidence in our Nation and in the direction our Nation is heading this year.

Immigrants are a part of a growing American coalition of working class voters: women, straight people and LGBT, environmentalists, Latino, Asians, Black, White, old and young, Muslim and Christians, Jewish and agnostic. They are coming together and mobilizing.

Together, even as some politicians push them away and try to divide up with suspicions of our fellow Americans, together, their diversity and dedication to democracy is a beautiful thing to witness.

AMERICA: LEARN FROM GREECE INSOLVENCY DAMAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office data reveals that America's financial condition has taken a sharp, ugly turn for the worse. America's estimated 2016 deficit is \$105 billion worse than 2015's already dangerous \$439 billion deficit.

America's debt has blown through the \$19 trillion mark and is projected to blow through the \$29 trillion mark in a decade.

America's Comptroller General and CBO warn that America's financial path is "unsustainable," meaning America faces a debilitating insolvency unless we get our financial house in order.

Mr. Speaker, those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

In that vein, America must learn from Greece, a country betrayed by decades of financially irresponsible leadership. In the past 5 years, Greece has repeatedly failed to meet its debt obligations and subsisted on three bailouts from the European Union.

The result?

The Greek economy is in a shambles. Greece has a 52 percent labor participation rate, 10 points worse than here in America. Greece's unemployment rate was recently 25 percent, approximating America's worse unemployment rate in the Great Depression. Worse yet, Greeks under the age of 25 suffer from a 48 percent unemployment rate.

Financial irresponsibility ultimately forces draconian austerity spending cuts. Greece has cut public health care spending from 6.8 percent of GDP in 2010 to roughly 5 percent today, thereby risking Greek lives. Cancer screening has been cut. HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria rates have surged as fewer Greeks receive proper treatment.

The public pensions Greek elderly citizens rely on for survival have been

cut an average of almost 50 percent since 2010 and are again on the chopping block.

Greek tax rates are exploding. Income taxes on farmers have doubled from 13 percent to 26 percent. Self-employed professionals and farmers say proposed social security and income tax increases will combine to consume as much as 75 percent of their incomes.

Greece's banking system is on the brink. In the summer of 2015, pre-European bailout, the Greek Government froze citizens' bank accounts, limiting cash withdrawals from ATMs to \$67 per day. Greeks could not even access their own money.

Post-bailout and as Greeks began fearing their savings accounts would be confiscated to pay for government debt, as occurred in nearby Cyprus—yet another insolvent country—Greeks withdrew cash from banks.

The run on banks caused the Greek Government to intervene and limit the right of Greek citizens to withdraw their own money, which caused citizens to cut deposits into Greek banks, which undermined the Greek banking system, which dried up the availability of loans for new business needed to create jobs in a rebounding economy.

Violent demonstrations are resulting. For example, on February 4, 2016, Athens, Greece, ABC News reported:

"Riot police have used tear gas in clashes with protesters during a mass rally in Athens as Greeks demonstrated against government pension reforms needed to meet demands of international creditors."

Mr. Speaker, there is an old adage that ignorance is bliss. I don't know about that, but I do know that ignorance is dangerous.

In 2009, Greece spent 3.2 percent of GDP on its national defense. Five years later, Greek defense spending was cut to 2.3 percent of GDP, a 28 percent cut.

Now, perhaps the world will not suffer from Greece's defense spending cuts, but what would be the effect on world peace if America's defense spending suffered a similar fate?

Mr. Speaker, time is running out. Washington must balance the budget before America's debt burden spirals out of control before it is too late to prevent the debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy that awaits us.

I pray the American people will be good stewards of our Republic in 2016 and elect Washington officials who both understand the threat posed by deficits and debt and have the backbone to fix it. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, America's future depends on it.

OPIOID ABUSE/MEDICAL MARIJUANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, last night Frontline on PBS had a com-

elling documentary on the opioid and heroin epidemic. We are now seeing politicians diving in. Governors across the country are sounding the alarm. It is being featured by Presidential candidates in both parties.

President Obama's budget has some very good suggestions highlighting tools to reduce drug overuse, overdose, evidence-based prevention programs, prescription drug monitoring, and prescription take-back events. There are a variety of things that are going in the right direction.

Yet, it is a little frustrating for me that the simplest, cheapest, safest solution to help these troubled people is not embraced: medical marijuana.

Actually, the public is largely there. For the last 20 years, the tide has been building for medical marijuana, even as the crisis on opioids has slowly started to take hold. It began with voter approval in California in 1996 and in Oregon 2 years later. Now 23 States have legalized medical marijuana, and two-thirds of Americans live in States where at least some form of medical marijuana is authorized.

There is a reason for this movement. A meta-analysis of 79 studies in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found solid evidence that medical marijuana is effective in treating chronic pain. There is no evidence of serious side effects among medical marijuana users who are actually less likely to drink alcohol or take other painkillers. And those States with medical marijuana actually have fewer overdose deaths.

Isn't this worth exploring? Especially when there is evidence that availability of medical marijuana dispensaries is associated with a significant decrease in substance abuse admissions and a reduction in opioid overdose deaths.

Recently, we have even had former NFL players come out and describe how they used medical marijuana to self-medicate rather than being shot up with painkillers by team doctors and being prescribed opioid pills.

What is perhaps most frustrating for me is the wrong-headed approach that prohibits Veterans Administration doctors from even talking to their patients about medical marijuana in the States where it is legal. That is ironic because the VA has its own veterans health crisis because their patients are dying from prescription overdoses at rates twice the national average. Opioid prescriptions by VA doctors have surged 270 percent over the last 12 years. They are prescribing significantly more opioids to patients suffering from PTSD and depression than other veterans, even though those are the patients most at risk of overdose and suicide. Nearly 1 million veterans who receive treatment for pain continue to consume those pills beyond 90 days.

It is clear that most veterans would probably be better off if we more fully utilized medical marijuana to treat

conditions of pain, depression, and PTSD.

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At the very least, we ought to allow the Veterans Administration doctors to work with their patients on this matter. That is why I will again be introducing my amendment that would make it clear that VA doctors in States where it is legal can work with their patients on medical marijuana.

Since I first introduced this legislation, I have watched growing support on the floor of the House for an amendment that would accomplish this. There has been interest in the Senate. Veterans groups are aware of this discrimination and the Veterans Administration's sorry record when it comes to helping our veterans with these chronic conditions by using conventional painkillers that lead to addiction and death.

Medical marijuana appears safer, effective, and is a low-cost way to deal with chronic pain. Nobody dies from an overdose of medical marijuana. Let's add this to our discussion, promote more effective research, and let VA doctors meet with their patients to talk about this as an alternative.

SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as the author of legislation that awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as the WASP, I rise in strong support of this bill, H.R. 4336, the Women Airforce Service Pilots Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act, presented by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY), my great friend and colleague. This legislation seeks to restore eligibility to these brave women pioneers for burial at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

The WASP were the first women in U.S. history to fly our military aircraft. During World War II, a time of great global conflict, these courageous women volunteered to fly noncombat missions so that every available male pilot could be deployed in combat.

The WASP served our Nation without hesitation and with no expectation of recognition or praise. More than 25,000 women applied for the program, but only 1,074 selected women earned their wings. Between the years 1942 and 1944, the WASP logged more than 60 million miles. With the exception of direct combat missions, the WASP flew the same aircraft as male pilots.

Although they took the military oath, the WASP were not recognized as military personnel for their time in service. Their patriotic contributions went unrecognized for many decades. It

wasn't until 1977 that Congress granted them veteran status; and then in 2002, the Arlington National Cemetery decided to allow the WASP, among others listed as Active Duty designees, to receive benefits consistent with the status that they had so rightfully earned. Unfortunately, last year, the Department of the Army rescinded this decision and ruled that the WASP were ineligible for burial at that site, citing a lack of space.

This is simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. These women deserve to be treated honorably, and our military branch should allocate the necessary space to accommodate these courageous women who sacrificed so much for our country.

We cannot just consider these women to be ineligible. These honorable women answered the call to serve during World War II. They did not turn their backs on the American people nor on their fellow servicemen. Their rights at Arlington National must be restored. We have to do this for the present and future generations to come.

Today, women in our military fly every type of aircraft, from the F-15 to the space shuttle, and I know this because my daughter-in-law, Lindsay Nelson Lehtinen, has flown combat missions both in Iraq and Afghanistan for the Marines. This opportunity was afforded to Lindsay thanks to the service of the Women Airforce Service Pilots. They were the trailblazers. They set the stage for women in the military.

I have been fortunate enough to personally meet some of these heroic women. As pictured in this poster, I presented south Florida WASP Ruth Shafer Fleisher and Frances Sargent with copies of the bill that I introduced and passed in Congress with the help of SUSAN DAVIS, and which was signed by the President, that honored the invaluable contributions of these heroic female pilots. We had this celebration at the Wings Over Miami Air Museum, which has served as the foundation for our community to learn more about veterans and aviators, including our proud WASP.

Throughout my years in Congress, I have also had the pleasure of meeting other south Florida WASP, including Shirley Kruse, pictured here, Bee Haydu, and Helen Wyatt Snapp. Although Frances and Helen are no longer with us, they still live in our hearts and in our minds, and they are embedded in the rich history of our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do what is right for our valiant, patriotic women and their wonderful families. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will bring up Congresswoman MCSALLY's bill tomorrow, Thursday, during a markup. I encourage all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support and pass this important and necessary bill so that we can continue to honor these women pioneers.

These women must receive the recognition that they are due. We must give them back the right that they earned, to be buried at Arlington. Thank you very much to these brave patriots.

REAUTHORIZATION OF CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of efforts to reauthorize child nutrition programs.

Last year the House and the Senate worked together in a bipartisan fashion to reauthorize our elementary and secondary education programs. I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to carry forward that momentum to complete a much-needed review and renewal of Federal child nutrition programs. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to employ similar goals and objectives: simplify, streamline, and empower State and local education agencies when reauthorizing these programs.

In particular, this approach can benefit our students and families by finding a path forward to simplify and streamline existing Federal nutrition and meal requirements without sacrificing the beneficial dietary value that school meals bring to students' daily lives. Much like we empowered our teachers to establish the curriculum and standards to best teach students they know so well, we likewise should empower those who know what our students will actually eat: the school professionals who work with the goal of making sure our children are able to enjoy healthy, nutritious meals.

Likewise, we can use this opportunity to continue efforts to ensure that our existing Federal nutrition programs are providing adequate and appropriate training to school professionals, as well as the resources necessary to improve and enhance our school meal delivery system.

Mr. Speaker, this opportunity will allow us to strengthen existing programs that strive to get nutritious meals to children year-round, and at earlier ages. Existing programs like the Summer Food Service Program can be enhanced and made more efficient to make sure they effectively reach those children who are most in need of quality, healthy meals. We can collaborate with Head Start, afterschool, and early childhood programs to better engage them in existing Federal programs that offer nutritious meals to young children most in need.

We have a strong infrastructure in place to provide children and families with quality, healthy meals, and we have an excellent opportunity to improve these programs. I respectfully call on my colleagues on both sides of